



Members of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds are introduced to the crowd at a Thunderbirds reception ceremony July 24, at the Wyoming Air National Guard.

Photo by Berni Ernst

Thunderbirds take to the sky for 52nd year

2nd Lt. Josh Edwards
Public affairs

The Air Force Thunderbirds took to the sky at 10 a.m. on July 27 at Laramie County Community College to mark their 52nd performance in Cheyenne.

More than 12,600 spectators were on hand to witness the Thunderbirds' aerial display, which featured six F-16 jet aircraft performing numerous maneuvers while displaying the jets' speed and capabilities.

The aerial performance kicked off at 10 a.m. with an entrance by the F-16s. Four jets flew over the crowd in diamond formation, while two solo jets flew

in with them on both sides before splitting off in opposite directions.

Theme music was played over loudspeakers and accompanied the aerial display throughout its entirety, with an announcer describing each maneuver to the crowd. The medley of music included everything from classic rock to hip hop, to movie themes and patriotic tunes. The music along with the sights and sounds of high-speed inverted passes by F-16s were an exciting combination for the audience.

Toward the end of the performance, all six jets made several passes in their famous delta formation as a tribute to the people of Chey-

enne. The aerial display lasted about 25 minutes, with no mishaps occurring in the air.

Spectators began arriving at LCCC for the Thunderbirds aerial display before 8 a.m., and were entertained by the Air Force band "Wild Blue Country." Crew members of the Thunderbirds team were on hand to meet and greet spectators.

Most of the 90th Space Wing senior staff was also in attendance. At 9:40 a.m., the Thunderbirds crew brought some enlisted Air Force members out in front of the audience to perform a reenlistment ceremony.

Several members of the Thunderbirds crew team participated in this

ceremony, making it a special moment for all reenlisting members.

The Thunderbirds aerial display has been a tradition of Cheyenne Frontier Days since their first performance 52 years ago.

The Thunderbird F-16s, pilots, and crew are stationed at Nellis AFB, Nev. This year, they have 75 air shows scheduled in 32 states as well as Mexico and Canada.

The F-16s are all painted in a red, white, and blue color scheme, colors symbolic to the United States of America.

For more information on the Thunderbirds, visit their Web site at <http://www.airforce.com/thunderbirds/>.



Photo by Berni Ernst

The crowd also enjoyed a performance by the Air Force country band, Wild Blue Country.



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Members of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds park their F-16 during a welcoming ceremony July 24.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Tessa Cubbon

The Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team soar above the crowd during their performance.